In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A general purpose computer system for executing a telephony application, comprising:

an application having telephony functionality for handling telephony-related communication signals when the computer system is operating in a main processor powered-on state;

a telephony control for inputting a command; ~~and~~

an operating system having a component operably coupled to the telephony control and the application, the component receiving the input command from the telephony control and sending the input command to the application; and

the computer system further configured to function as a conventional telephone appliance when in a main processor powered-down state such that a user may receive incoming calls through the computer system via a conventional telephone.

2. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality of the application comprises answering a telephone call.

3. (original) The system of claim 2 wherein the telephony control comprises a talk button for inputting a command to answer the telephone call.

4. (original) The system of claim 2 wherein the telephony control comprises a speakerphone button for inputting a command to answer the telephone call.

5. (original) The system of claim 2 wherein the telephony control comprises a hook switch for inputting a command to answer the telephone call.

6. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality of the application includes the capability to place a telephone call.

7. (original) The system of claim 6 wherein the telephony control comprises a speakerphone button for inputting a command to place the telephone call.

8. (original) The system of claim 6 wherein the telephony control comprises a hook switch for inputting a command to place the telephone call.

9. (original) The system of claim 6 wherein the telephony control comprises a talk button for inputting a command to place the telephone call.

10. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality of the application comprises switching from one telephone call on a first line to another telephone call on a second line.

11. (original) The system of claim 10 wherein the telephony control comprises a flash button for inputting a command to switch the telephone call on the first line to the other telephone call on the second line.

12. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality comprises conferencing in a telephone call from a second line to a telephone call on a first line.

13. (original) The system of claim 12 wherein the telephony control comprises a conference button that inputs a command to conference in the telephone call on the first line to the telephone call on the second line.

14. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality comprises placing a telephone call on hold.

15. (original) The system of claim 14 wherein the telephony control comprises a hold button for inputting a command to place the telephone call on hold.

16. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality comprises muting the audio during a telephone call.

17. (original) The system of claim 16 wherein the telephony control comprises a mute button for inputting a command to mute the audio during the telephone call.

18. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality comprises playing voice mail.

19. (original) The system of claim 18 wherein the telephony control comprises a voice mail button for inputting a command to play voice mail.

20. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality comprises switching the default system audio input device from a handset to a personal computer microphone.

21. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality comprises switching the default system audio input device from a landline to a cell phone.

22. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality comprises switching the default system audio input device from a cell phone to a speakerphone.

23. (original) The system of claim 20 wherein the telephony control comprises a microphone button for inputting a command to switch the default system audio input device from the handset to the personal computer microphone.

24. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony functionality comprises switching the default system audio input device from a headset to a personal computer microphone.

25. (original) The system of claim 24 wherein the telephony control comprises a microphone button for inputting a command to switch the default system audio input device from the headset to the personal computer microphone.

26. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony control comprises a talk button operable as a momentary switch that toggles the hook state for a telephone receiver between on-hook and off-hook.

27. (original) The system of claim 26 wherein the telephony control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations for indicating the off-hook state.

28. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony control comprises a hook switch that toggles the hook state for a telephone receiver between on-hook and off-hook.

29. (original) The system of claim 28 wherein the telephony control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations for indicating the off-hook state.

30. (original) The system of claim 29 wherein the indicator comprising a visual representation illuminates with the color green.

31. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony control comprises a speakerphone button operable as a momentary switch that toggles the hook state for a telephone receiver between on-hook and off-hook.

32. (original) The system of claim 31 wherein the telephony control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations for indicating the off-hook state.

33. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony control comprises a mute button operable as a momentary switch that toggles the mute state for a telephone receiver between mute and not-mute.

34. (original) The system of claim 33 wherein the telephony control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations for indicating the mute state.

35. (original) The system of claim 34 wherein the indicator comprising a visual representation illuminates with the color amber.

36. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony control comprises a hold button operable as a momentary switch that toggles the hold state for a telephone receiver between an on-hold state and a not-on-hold state.

37. (original) The system of claim 36, wherein the on-hold state comprises having a telephone call on hold with the telephone receiver free for performing telephony operations.

38. (original) The system of claim 36 wherein the telephony control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations for indicating the on-hold state.

39. (original) The system of claim 38 wherein the indicator comprising a visual representation illuminates with the color amber.

40. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony control comprises a flash button operable to generate a momentary on-hook condition to signal the application of a telephony event.

41. (original) The system of claim 40 wherein the telephony event comprises notification of a waiting telephone call.

42. (original) The system of claim 40 wherein the telephony event comprises notification of a telephone call on hold.

43. (original) The system of claim 40 wherein the telephony control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations for indicating the event.

44. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony control comprises a conference button operable to generate a momentary signal to the application to join the current call with one or more calls waiting on hold.

45. (original) The system of claim 44 wherein the telephony control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations for indicating the state of a conference call.

46. (original) The system of claim 45 wherein the indicator comprising a visual representation illuminates with the color green.

47. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony control comprises a microphone button operable as a momentary switch that toggles the microphone state for a telephone receiver between the default audio input device and a secondary audio input device.

48. (original) The system of claim 47 wherein the telephony control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations for indicating the microphone state.

49. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the telephony control comprises a voice mail button operable to generate a momentary signal to the application to access voice mail messages.

50. (original) The system of claim 49 wherein the telephony control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations for indicating the presence of a voice mail message.

51. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the component operably coupled to the telephony control comprises a hardware interface.

52. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the operating system further comprises a component for controlling an indicator for the telephony control.

53. (original) The system of claim 52, wherein the indicator uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations.

54. (currently amended) In a computing environment, a method comprising:

receiving a telephone call on one of a plurality of communications networks;

routing the telephone call to a computer system operable to handle telephony-related communication signals;

if the computer system is in a main processor powered-on state, then:

detecting actuation of a telephony control requesting to take the receiver off-hook to answer the telephone call, and in response, connecting the call; and

detecting the receiver in an on-hook state, and in response, terminating the telephone call; and

if the computer system is in a main processor powered-down state, then passing the telephone call to a conventional telephone that remains operational on the main processor powered-down computer system.

55. (original) The method of claim 54 wherein detecting actuation of the telephony control comprises detecting a lifting of a handset from a cradle hook switch operably coupled to the computer.

56. (original) The method of claim 54 wherein detecting actuation of the telephony control comprises detecting a pressing of a talk button operably coupled to the computer.

57. (original) The method of claim 54 wherein detecting actuation of the telephony control comprises detecting a pressing of a speakerphone button operably coupled to the computer.

58. (original) The method of claim 54 wherein detecting the receiver in an on-hook state comprises detecting a placing of a handset in a cradle hook switch operably coupled to the computer.

59. (original) The method of claim 54 wherein detecting the receiver in an on-hook state comprises detecting a pressing of a talk button operably coupled to the computer.

60. (original) The method of claim 54 wherein detecting the receiver in an on-hook state comprises detecting a pressing of a speakerphone button operably coupled to the computer.

61. (original) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 54.

62. (currently amended) A method for connecting a telephone call in a computer system, comprising:

receiving a telephone call on one of a plurality of communications networks;

routing the telephone call to a computer system operable to handle telephony-related communication signals;

if the computer system is in a main processor powered-on state, then:

detecting actuation of a telephony control requesting to take the receiver off-hook to answer the telephone call, and in response, answering the call; and

transferring the telephone call to a second receiver; and

if the computer system is in a main processor powered-down state, then passing the telephone call to a conventional telephone appliance of the main processor powered-down computer system that remains operational when the computer system is in the main processor powered-down state.

63. (original) The method of claim 62 wherein transferring the telephone call to the second receiver comprises taking the second receiver off-hook in response to actuation of a telephony control.

64. (original) The method of claim 62 wherein receiving the telephony call comprises receiving the telephone call from a landline.

65. (original) The method of claim 64 wherein transferring the telephone call to a second receiver comprises transferring the call to a cell phone.

66. (original) The method of claim 62 wherein receiving the telephony call comprises receiving the telephone call from a cell phone.

67. (original) The method of claim 66 wherein transferring the telephone call to a second receiver comprises transferring the call to a speakerphone.

68 (original) The method of claim 62 further comprising detecting the second receiver in an on-hook state, and in response, terminating the telephone call.

69. (original) The method of claim 62 wherein the telephony control comprises a hook switch.

70. (original) The method of claim 62 wherein the telephony control comprises a talk button.

71. (original) The method of claim 62 wherein the telephony control comprises a speakerphone button.

72. (original) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 56.

73. (currently amended) In a computer system, a method comprising:

receiving a telephone call on one of a plurality of communications networks;

routing the telephone call to a computer system operable to handle telephony-related communication signals;

if the computer system is in a main processor powered-on state, then:

detecting pressing of a telephony control to take the receiver off-hook to answer the telephone call, and in response, answering the call; and

detecting pressing of a hold button, and in response, placing the call on-hold; and

if the computer system is in a main processor powered-down state, then passing the telephone call to a conventional telephone appliance of the computer system that remains operational.

74. (cancelled)

75. (currently amended) A general purpose computer for connecting telephone calls, comprising:

means for receiving a telephone call on one of a plurality of communications networks;

means for routing the telephone call to a computer system operable to handle telephony-related communication signals when the computer system is in a main processor powered-on state,

means for taking the receiver off-hook using telephony controls to answer the telephone call when the computer system is in the main processor powered-on state; ~~and~~

means for putting the receiver on-hook using telephony controls to terminate the telephone call when the computer system is in the main processor powered-on state; and

means for passing the telephone call though the computer system to a conventional telephone that is operable when the computer system in a main processor powered-down state.